

2/18/09 EmPOWER-EECBG Presentation Questions

1) Q: Our HVAC system project is ready to go. How quickly could the project be approved?

A: MEA needs to first receive a signed grant agreement and a DUNS number from your local government. MEA's technical assistance contractor will then review your proposed project to calculate project energy savings and ensure compliance with all ARRA requirements.

One of the ARRA requirements involves a review by the Maryland Historical Trust to ensure "no adverse effects" on historical properties. This process normally takes approximately 30 days. All EmPOWER EECBG projects must be reviewed by the Maryland Historical Trust.

Taking into account all of these requirements, the very earliest a project could be approved would most likely be sometime at the end of March.

2) Q: Does the whole project have to meet the Buy American requirement, if the project is receiving funding from multiple sources?

A: Yes.

3) Q: If the project is ready, and we are certain it will qualify, can we start the project next month?

A: Any work completed prior to the approval of your project by MEA is done at your own risk. There are many ARRA requirements associated with the EmPOWER EECBG program. If you fail to comply with any of these requirements, your project may wind up being ineligible for EmPOWER EECBG funding. MEA highly recommends that each local government wait for MEA to approve their proposed project before proceeding forward.

4) Q: Can these funds be used on to purchase new equipment or can they only replace existing equipment?

A: In general, these funds are to be used to improve the energy efficiency of an existing system, such as a HVAC system or a building. Renewable energy projects would be the exception- in most cases, you would be installing a brand new system (i.e. solar panels).

Follow-up question: What about insulation? We don't have any in our walls.

A: Insulation would be considered a retrofit of the existing building.

5) Comment: Davis Bacon and Buy American requirements make it difficult for the small towns to accept this money because of the magnitude of the requirements and the limited amount of staff time.

Reply: MEA recognizes that the ARRA requirements are significant. MEA is planning on develop a list of project options that could be more easily implemented by towns receiving relatively small grants, in an attempt to minimize the amount of administrative work required by each town. If you think you would be at all interested in participating in this program, MEA recommends signing the grant

agreement and submitting your DUNS number to MEA. If you feel that you are unable to comply with the project requirements at a later date, there is no obligation to proceed forward.

6) Q: Why is the replacement of thermostats on residential homes not eligible under EmPOWER-EECBG? Why are only municipally operated buildings eligible?

A: MEA focused the EmPOWER EECBG program on government owned buildings to give local governments the opportunity to lead by example by implementing energy efficiency and/or renewable energy projects on their facilities.

While MEA's EmPOWER EECBG program does not fund programmable thermostat replacements in residential homes, many of the Maryland electric utilities are providing programmable thermostats to customers in their service territory as part of their EmPOWER Maryland demand response programs.

7) Q: Can multiple projects be pooled toward a single bid?

A: Multiple governments could potentially decide to join together to bid services, as long as the bidding process complies with each participating local government's procurement process.

8) Q: Can we give up our EmPOWER EECBG funds?

A: Yes, the funds have been allocated to each local government but you have no obligation to participate. If you do not want to participate, MEA requests that you send us an email notifying us of this decision.

9) Q: Can we give our eligible funds to a neighboring jurisdiction?

A: No, you can't "gift" funds to another local government.

10) Q: What happens to the EmPOWER EECBG funds when a municipality declines the funds?

A: MEA can request permission from DOE to modify the terms of our grant award to allow us to use the remaining funds in a different way. Until this request is approved, the funds remain at DOE.

11) Q: Our town charter requires we go with the lowest bid, Davis Bacon bids are not the lowest bid. How does this get reconciled?

A: Since you are participating in a project funded by ARRA, the scope of your project would need to change to now include a requirement that bidding contractors be willing and able to comply with Davis-Bacon. You would now be looking for the lowest bid that is able to comply with Davis-Bacon requirements.

12) Q: Is the money coming from the State or Federal Government?

A: The Federal Government has awarded a grant to MEA through the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). MEA is using our grant funds to provide sub-grants to Maryland local governments not receiving an EECBG grant directly from DOE.

13) Q: Does a local government receiving an EmPOWER EECBG grant need to have a single audit completed?

A: As the recipient of a federal grant, MEA is required to comply with the single audit requirement. Each local government receiving an EmPOWER EECBG sub-grant is required to allow potential MEA auditors to review their records but sub-grantees are not required to comply with the single audit requirement themselves.

14) Q: Do sidewalks qualify?

A: While sidewalk installation projects are allowable under the federal Department of Energy's EECBG grant program, MEA's DOE grant has not been approved for sidewalks installations.

15) Q: Are electronic forms available?

A: The grant forms have been posted to the MEA EmPOWER EECBG website at <http://www.energy.state.md.us/EECBG.asp> under "Fillable Grant Forms".

16) Q: What about section 1512 ARRA monthly reporting requirements, do we have to do these in conjunction with MEA monthly reporting requirements?

A: No, local governments will not have to complete a 1512 monthly report. As the grant recipient, MEA will need to comply with the 1512 monthly reporting requirement.

17) Q: When is the first report due? For example, if a project starts in March, is the first report due on April 5th?

A: Yes, the reports are due on the 5th of the month. This includes the month immediately following the month the project starts.

18) Q: How long will grant recipients need to submit records to the MEA on a monthly basis?

A: Monthly records will need to be submitted until the project installation has been completed.